

## Objective of this Workshop

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Bangalore was once known as a city of thousand lakes. Many have disappeared and the others are languishing because of:

- breaching of inflow channels
- encroachment of lake beds
- pollution - sewage and industrial effluents

The result is flooding whenever there is heavy rain. Also looming water crisis a few years ahead.

Cauvery alone cannot meet the needs of Bangalore. There is urgent need to restore lakes and recharge ground water levels.

### What then is the right strategy?

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*For their support, Bangalore Environment Trust is grateful to:*

Mrs. L.V. Sharada Rao

Raman Research Institute

Mr. Aroon Raman

Bharat Electronics Limited

Mr. Gautam Sonti

Lake Development Authority

## Programme

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### How to Save Bangalore Lakes

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**Saturday 4 July 2009**

1430 hrs	Fellowship
1500 - 1505 hrs	Welcome by Zafar Futehally
1505 - 1510 hrs	Order of Business - Capt S Prabhala
1510 - 1530 hrs	Bangalore Lakes, 20 years ago and now - K V Narendra
1530 - 1550 hrs	Why Save Lakes - Ravi Narayanan
1550 - 1610 hrs	Steps to Protect Lakes - V Balasubramanian
1610 - 1640 hrs	Interaction with Participants
1640 - 1700 hrs	Tea
1700 - 1800 hrs	Panel Discussion

#### **Members:**

Sudhakar Rao, IAS

Dr S Subrahmanya, IAS

Dr P J Dilip Kumar, IFS

P B Ramamurthy, IAS

Dr H C Sharath Chandra

C S Vedant, IFS

Dr A N Yellappa Reddy, IFS (Retd)

V Balasubramanian, IAS (Retd)

Ravi Narayanan

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*Please confirm your participation to*

*Mr S. Sundara Murthy,*

*Tel: 080-4130 6528, 98453 00465,*

*E-mail: [corporateoffice@ramanfibres.com](mailto:corporateoffice@ramanfibres.com)*

## Speakers and Panel Members

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Zafar Futehally

Eminent Environmentalist  
Founder and Trustee of BET

Capt S Prabhala

Chairman, BET,  
Former CMD, BEL

Ravi Narayanan

Advisor, Arghyam, Vice Chair,  
Asia Pacific Water Forum

K V Narendra

Director, Centre for Science  
and Technology, Bangalore

V Balasubramanian IAS (Retd)

Trustee, BET,  
Former Addl Chief Secretary,  
Government of Karnataka

Sudhakar Rao IAS

Chief Secretary,  
Government of Karnataka

Dr S Subrahmanya IAS

Commissioner, BBMP

Dr P J Dilip Kumar IFS

MD, Karnataka Forest  
Development Corporation

P B Ramamurthy, IAS

Chairman, BWSSB

Dr Sharath Chandra

Chairman,  
Karnataka State Pollution  
Control Board

C S Vedant, IFS

CEO, Lake Development  
Authority, Karnataka

Dr A N Yellappa Reddy, IFS (Retd)

Trustee, BET, Former Secretary,  
Ecology and Environment,  
Karnataka



Bangalore Environment Trust,  
313, 5th Cross, 7 'B' Main, Koramangala,  
Bangalore - 560 042  
[www.bngenvtrust.org](http://www.bngenvtrust.org)



599, 12th Main Road,  
HAL II Stage, Indiranagar,  
Bangalore 560 008  
[www.arghyam.org](http://www.arghyam.org)



## Workshop on How to Save Lakes of Bangalore

Saturday 4th July 2009  
at 14.30 hrs

Raman Research Institute  
C.V. Raman Avenue, Sadashivanagar  
Bangalore 560 080

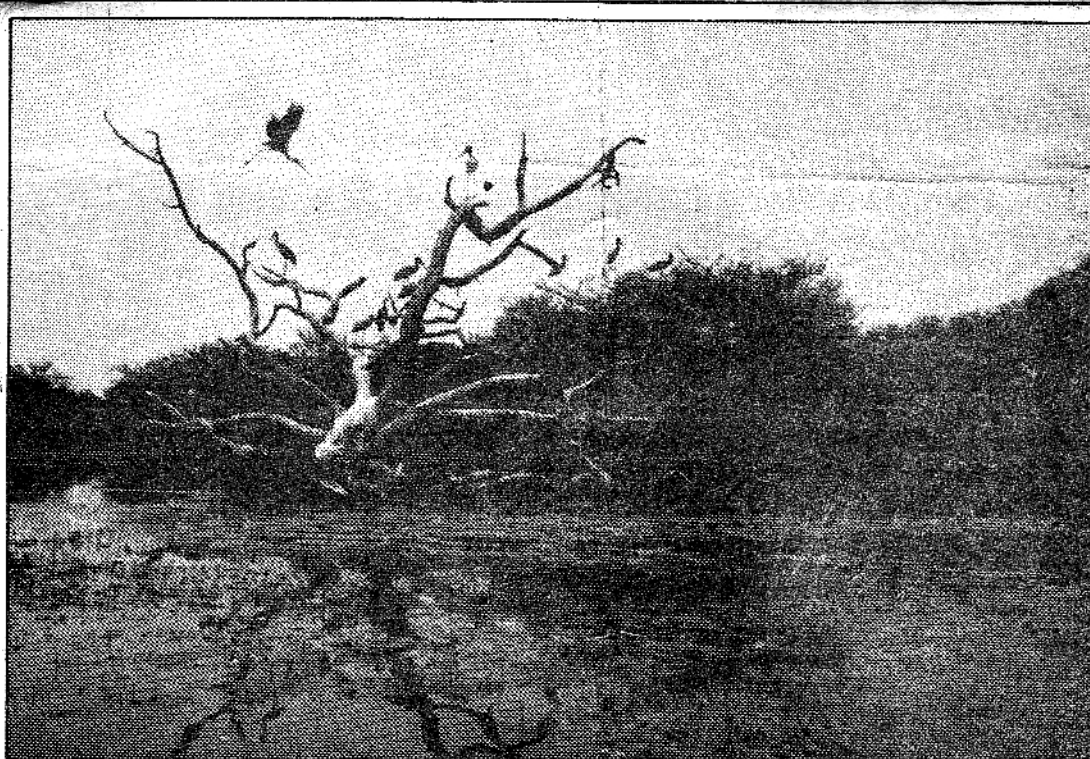


## Birds are effective monitors of environmental deterioration, says ZAFAR FUTEHALLY

**W**E are living in a decade, when we have recognised at long last, that all our activities – industrial, agricultural and others – are dependent on the renewable natural resources of our planet – air, water, soil, flora, and fauna – and the inter-actions between them. These are now known as our life support system, and our main objective should be to use them on a sustained yield basis.

If we have to use these resources without over-exploiting or destroying them, we must have an effective monitoring system to check on their status and quality on a continuing basis. However, our environmental legislation and monitoring systems are in the nature of post mortems. It is only after a river has become dangerously polluted, or land irreparably eroded, that we get into action. By then, quite often the problem has got out of hand.

I would like to put forward the point of view that birds can be



# When the birds start to fly away

5 Aug 90

## ENVIRONMENT

effective monitors of the environment for four reasons. They are visible, and the presence or absence of any species can be easily noticed; they are found everywhere, and there is not a square mile of Indian territory where there is not some species of bird or other; they have a metabolic rate which is much faster than that of humans, so that they suffer from pollution before it affects humans, and can therefore act as an early warning system. That is why canaries are kept in coal mines so that if there is any escape of the deadly carbon monoxide the birds die, and the men have a chance to get away in good time. Finally every species of bird has a strong connection with a particular habitat, so that the absence of a bird which has been traditionally present in an area indicates that some habitat is being destroyed.

Let me give you some examples. Some years ago foresters in Germany found that woodpeckers were disappearing. This was a serious matter because these birds destroy grubs and other wood boring insects and keep the trees in good health. Careful observation revealed that woodpeckers were being eliminated because all the mature and decaying trees were being cut down. These trees are important, in fact necessary, for the nesting of woodpeckers, because in spite of their strong bills, they cannot make nesting holes in

the trunks of young and healthy trees. The foresters then decided to retain some mature trees in the felling coupes, and in fact set up trunks of decaying trees within the forest. Very soon the woodpeckers revived, and nature's balance was restored.

But one of the most dramatic examples of birds having indicated serious pollution of the environment was the case of the Western Grebe in the United States. A thousand pairs nested on the famous Clear Lake north west of California. The lake was a popular resort for anglers but the fishing folk were greatly bothered by gnats which got into their eyes and ears. Gnats are close relatives of mosquitos but they are not blood suckers. Nevertheless the humans could not put up with them. At that time, soon after the Second World War, chlorinated hydrocarbons were discovered, and it was decided to spray the water with a mild mixture of DDD a close cousin of DDT, in the proportion of one part chemical to 70 million parts of water. Initially this move was successful, but by 1954 the gnats had revived, so a somewhat stronger mixture of one part DDD 50 million parts of water was applied. The gnats died all right, but to the surprise of everyone the thousand pairs of Western Grebes were reduced to just 30 pairs. And even these birds failed to produce any young. Then the awful truth

about the geometrical progression of the deadly chemical through the food chain of nature became apparent to the scientists. In her famous book *Silent Spring* Rachel Carson describes what happened. DDD was first absorbed by the plankton, then by the small herbivorous fish which ate the plankton, then by the carnivorous fish which lived on smaller aquatic life... Finally the poison was absorbed by the birds, and unbelievably though the introduction in the water was never more than one-fiftieth part of a million, the dead bodies of the Western Grebes had as much as 1600 parts to the million of the chemical. It must be said to the credit of the US Government that after these and other similar facts became known the use of DDD and DDT was banned.

A striking co-relation between birds and the state of the environment was provided by the situation in London. The great London smog of 1952 killed over 5000 people. Then the Clean Air Act of 1956, and its effective implementation worked wonders – not merely for the humans but also for the birds. In 1978 the London Natural History Society reported the sighting of 183 species of birds within 20 miles of St Paul's Cathedral. Before the Clean Air Act was passed less than half the number could be found within this area.

It must be remembered that just as the absence of a bird indicates a deteriorating environment, the presence of a new species in an area is also a matter for concern. A

case in point is the recent arrival of Black-winged kites in Kerala. The Black-winged kite is an inhabitant of open scrub and grassland areas and this is related to its method of hunting. It hovers in the air like a kestrel above a possible prey and then parachutes down with wings held in a V above the body. This method of hunting is obviously unsuited for forested areas. So until a few decades ago when Kerala was heavily forested no kites of this species were found in Kerala. The presence of these Kites in Kerala now is proof, if proof was needed, that there is a radical reduction in its forest cover.

The way to use birds as indicators of the environment is to form a grid covering the whole country, and plotting the species breeding within the particular area. The British have done this, and the result is the atlas of the Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland. The survey was carried out between 1968-72 by over 10,000 birdwatchers. "Every part of Britain and Ireland was visited (and) each of the 3862,10-Km squares being covered during the five years". Britain has only 229 breeding species while we have something over 600. But we have now a growing number of birdwatchers, and if a modest beginning could be made in this direction, under the patronage of the Department of Environment, it may, in the course of time become a valuable tool for the conservation of our natural habitats.

*Bombay Natural History Society*

Founded 1883

Ref:1322/99

30th March 1999

Dear Member,

We are happy to invite you on an Orientation Programme for our new members, on Friday, 16th April 1999 at 4.30 p.m. at Hornbill House.

I will be grateful if you confirm your participation by 13th April 1999.

Orientation Programme:

- 4.30 - 5.00 - Introduction of the Society  
By the Honorary Secretary
- 5.00 - 6.00 - Visit to BNHS Collections/Library
- 6.00 - 6.30 - Tea

Yours sincerely,



Asad Rahmani  
Director

PBS/sa.

Hornbill House, Dr. Salim Ali Chowk, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai - 400 023.

Tel.: 282 1811 • Fax: (91-22) 283 7615 • Gram: HORNBILL

E-mail : [bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in](mailto:bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in)

August 13, 2007

Dear Birders, Environmentalists and Conversationalists,

During the past week, I have had several discussions with expert birders and others about the ongoing project by EIH Ltd. at Hebbal Lake. Many of you have been agitated with what you have seen with dumpers and heavy earth moving equipment operating in the area and changing the entire face of the water body, which was a prized location for birds.

I was also concerned and I wrote an article in the Deccan Herald which some of you have seen. The article reached Mr. Biki Oberoi, Chairman and he sent a message saying that he was seriously interested in the preservation of the natural environment. He advised that EIH Limited has undertaken the project to revive Hebbal Lake, with no intention of using the lake for commercial purposes. Hence, he advised that he would be more than willing to incorporate major changes in the project report, in terms of withdrawing plans for a floating restaurant, curio shops, etc.

Ms. Ketaki Narain, Director - Corporate Communications, EIH Ltd came to Bangalore especially to discuss matters with me and you, so that we could have a frank and careful discussion about what needs to be done in the long term interest of Hebbal Lake.

I am sending you a copy of the DPR, the detailed project report. But please realize that as a result, of the preliminary discussion which I have had with the representatives of EIH Ltd. the following changes have already been incorporated:

- 01) The plans for a floating restaurant and the other allied infrastructure relating to shops, etc. have been abandoned. A letter has already gone to the Lake Development Authority in this connection.
- 02) What has been done so far at site is the de-silting to remove the weeds and other unwanted material which had accumulated in the water. De-silting has resulted in increasing the depth of the water by one metre. This de-silting was done to ensure that the seeds of the weeds embedded in the soil were also removed so that in future there would be no infestation of this kind.
- 03) There are two sewage inlets into the lake. At the major inlet a sewage treatment plant as well as silt traps are being constructed. The other inlet is very minor and the inflow will be diverted into the adjoining municipal drain.
- 04) This de-silting and de-weeding and the construction of the sewage treatment plant is expected to be completed by the end of October 2007.

- 05) It might be noted that after the end of the Indo-Norwegian Environment Programme the Lake deteriorated very quickly because no sewage treatment plan or silt traps had been installed, apart from the fact that there was no kind of protection against further pollution and encroachment.
- 06) It is now up to you, the experts, who are so familiar with the needs of the Lake to continue the dialogue with EIH Ltd. and give them your ideas so that Hebbal can be revived in a manner which will be an asset to Bangalore.

Some of you were concerned that the traditional rights of the surrounding villagers would be affected by this project and mention was made about fishing and access to the area by common people. This will be taken care of and I understand that there has been no restriction on fishing and the project authorities are in close contact with the fishing community.

May I now request you to kindly contact Ms. Ketaki Narain, Director - Corporate Communications, EIH Ltd. and give your views on what ecological steps need to be taken so that Hebbal becomes the kind of wetland which will be the pride of Bangalore.

Her contact details are as follows:

Email: [ketaki.narain@eih-india.com](mailto:ketaki.narain@eih-india.com)

Handset: 09999 601 533

Kind regards,



Zafar Futehally

**R. Raghunandan Kumar**

M. Sc. (Econ), MBA



Chartered Cottage (A1) 166, (Old No. 8) Langford Road  
Bangalore - 560 025. Tel No. 2225515, 2240641

## **FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT**

**18.09.06**

**Under the auspices of**

**The BANGALORE ENVIRONMENT TRUST**

**The KARNATAKA HERITAGE SOCIETY**

**And KARNATAKA PARKS & GARDENS**

**A Public Meeting will be held to project the visual and ecological importance of the TREES OF BANGALORE**

**Date : Saturday January 6, 2007**

**At 10 a.m.**

**Venue : The Mythic Society Hall ( opposite RBI )**

**Nrupathunga Road**

**Bangalore 560001**

**Justice M.F. Saldanha ( Retd. ) will preside. Further details and agenda will be announced in the next circular.**

**This advance notice is to request you to keep yourself free for this meeting, which we hope will help to restore the former greenery of Bangalore. Your participation and support will be of great value.**

**Zafar Futehally**

**Trustee - Bangalore Environment Trust**

# Hale finds a comet, but not a job

By Tim Friend

What is the most common question asked by a scientist five years after getting a Ph.D?

Would you like fries with that? That joke, says Alan Hale, co-discoverer of the spectacular comet Hale-Bop, sums up the state of opportunity for young scientists in the US. Indeed, Hale, who says he is unemployed, is so upset that he has begun using the Internet and his "15 minutes of fame" to tell students to think twice before investing in a career in science.

"Under the current situation, I cannot encourage any kid to take on a career in science," says Hale, 39, from his home in Cloudfcroft, N.M. "But I want to solve the problem, and the first step is admitting that there is one."

The problem, as Hale sees it, is that a passion for science and a doctorate do not buy much opportunity. In an open letter posted on the Internet, Hale set off lively debate when he wrote:

"I was inspired by the scientific discoveries and events taking place during my childhood to pursue a career in science, only to find, after completing the rigours of undergraduate and graduate school, that the opportunities are limited at best and are what I usually describe as abysmal."

The overall employment picture may not look bad. Unemployment rates for all scientists and engi-

neers was 1.5 percent in 1995, says Catherine Gaddy, executive director, Commission on Professionals in Science and technology, Washington, D.C.

"This is what you would expect because of the high level of training," Gaddy says. "But our concern, like Alan Hale's, is over other characteristics, such as how long does it take to find employment, how many offers does a person receive, and is the job permanent or temporary?"

Hale says, sure, he was employed soon after receiving his Ph.D. His first job was at a science museum that required a three-

hour commute each day, paid \$23,000 a year, provided no health benefits and required a mandatory two-week unpaid vacation.

"I was among the employed in the statistics," Hale says. "But what does that mean?"

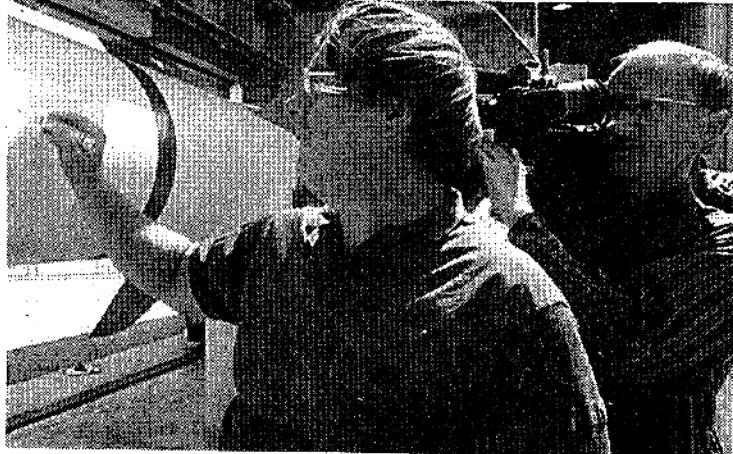
Hale says he has received hundreds of e-mail responses from scientists who have had difficulty finding good jobs.

Hale says anti-science sentiment and misunderstanding of science underlie the problems.

"I consider the current situation due to an overall lack of science literacy in our society," Hale says.

(USA Today)

AP



**LOOKING FOR WORK:** Astronomer Alan Hale signs a sounding rocket that will carry a telescope into the sky to photograph the comet Hale-Bopp, which he discovered.

## Letters to the Editor

shooting of four leopards by officially designated hunters. Whether the maneater has been killed is still uncertain.

Opinions are sharply polarised between the environmentalists who urge that "innocent leopards" in the area should not be killed and the frenzied locals demanding that "every leopard" must be destroyed.

The Birur maneater inhabits a densely populated landscape, along with several normal leopards. Normally, such leopards survive by eating domestic stock, dogs, wild pigs and small mammals, and are afraid of humans. Rarely, when a leopard or tiger becomes a habitual maneater (as opposed to accidental mauling by a cornered cat), the only rational option is to kill it quickly, to avoid a public backlash against wildlife conservation.

It is simply not feasible to capture such maneaters alive rapidly, and in the interim more human lives may be lost. Moreover, when hunting a big cat there is no practical way of identifying a cat before it is shot or poisoned, not withstanding what some of our armchair "pugmark pundits" say. Consequently, a few other harmless leopards may also get killed.

Environmentalists must pragmatically accept such killings, so as not to lose public support for wildlife conservation. On the other hand, local leaders who demand every harmless leopard be slaughtered, need to be reasonable.

Wherever populations of both humans and big cats coexist at high densities, occasionally maneaters will emerge. If the maneater hunts in the 97

per cent landscape set aside for human interests (like in Birur), several cats may have to be killed, to quickly eliminate the maneater. But what should we do if such maneating problem starts inside critical breeding habitats for big cats?

Surely, we simply cannot wipe out big cats even in the mere 3 per cent land area which is their last refuge? Those favouring the continuation of human settlements and activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry and forest product collection inside critical big cat habitats should give a serious thought to this issue in the light of the tragic events in Birur.

**K. ULLAS KARANTH**  
MYSORE

## Deal with maneaters

Sir: The press has reported extensively on the killing and eating of four people by a leopard near Birur and the

INDIAN EXPRESS

26-2-1996



Zafar Futehally

2205 Oakwood, 8th Main,  
3rd Block, Koramangala,  
BANGALORE - 560 034

Tele.No: 5533684

5th September 1995

Brig. V.K. Bhaskar, Vr.C.  
Commandant,  
MEG & Centre,  
BANGALORE - 560 042

Dear Brig. Bhaskar,

In continuation of my letter of 31st August, I am giving you the names of the persons who can be trusted to provide valuable information about the bird life of the MEG Centre, and make proposals for improving conditions around the lakeside in accordance with the discussions which we have had.

I am giving the names below and perhaps you will be good enough to send them a letter authorising them to visit the area at their convenience, and take photographs and notes as they wish.

For Ornithology:

Dr. B.K. Chakrapani,  
Copala Krupa, 159 III Main,  
III Stage, III Phase,  
Banashankari,  
G.KERE ATCHKAT

Dr. Abraham Verghese,  
139, 2nd Main,  
Domlur, 2nd Stage,  
BANGALORE - 560 071

Dr. A.K. Chakravathy,  
Junior Entomologist,  
Sunflower Scheme,  
U.A.C., GKVK,  
BANGALORE - 560 065

Col. R.T. Chacko,  
Spartan Heights,  
16/17 Richmond Road,  
A.301, 'A' Block, 3rd Floor,  
BANGALORE - 560 025

Mr. K.V. Narendra,  
111/1, 56 (New), 8th Main,  
Malleswaram,  
BANGALORE - 560 003

Mr. S. Sridhar,  
C/o Navbharath Enterprises,  
Seshadripuram,  
BANGALORE - 560 020

Mr. Z. Futehally,  
2205 Oakwood, 8th Main,  
3rd Block, Koramangala,  
BANGALORE - 560 034

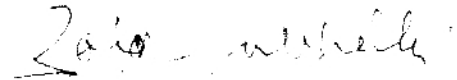
For Botany:

Dr. Naaseem,  
Head, Botany Department,  
St. Joseph's College,  
Residency Road,  
BANGALORE - 560 025

What we will do is to have a few preliminary surveys on our own, and when we come to some conclusions we will get in touch with you for finalisation of a plan.

I trust this is in order.

Yours sincerely,



Zafar Futehally

c.c. Col. C. Badrinarayanan,  
Commanding Officer,  
Trg. Bn. I,  
MEG & Centre,  
BANGALORE - 560 042

c.c. Shri Yellappa Reddy, IFS,  
Special Secretary to Govt.,  
Dept. of Forest, Environment & Ecology,  
7th Floor, 4th Stage,  
Multistoried Building,  
BANGALORE 560 001 (with copy of letter of 31.8.95.)

# Bird - watchers Unlimited

By INDIRA SINGH

WITH 290 of the 1220 feathered species painstakingly ticked off in my treasured tome — 'Safim Ali's pictorial guide to the birds of the Indian sub-continent' — I fancy myself quite a diehard bird-watcher, and am ever-ready to hitch to the remotest wilderness for a chance of peering at some rare bird through my battered old binoculars.

So, when a fellow tippler in a London pub, to whom I had been bragging about my bird spotting experiences in the Bharatpur bird sanctuary, suggested a visit to the Isles of Scilly, I jumped at the idea. "They are the British bird-watchers paradise", he observed. "Strong westerly gales bring in all manners of American migratory birds, which setting off from Florida for the North Pole get blown to the islands willy nilly. Easterly winds too can bring in an interesting bird or two. Last year a Radde's Warbler meant for Thailand made unscheduled landing. Seven rare American land birds have been spotted in a single day." His endless tales were taller than the proverbial fishing stories, but it did not deter me from making the choppy crossing from Penzance to land at Agnes, the remotest of the group of tiny islands edging Land's End.

Used to solitary vigiles during my

bird watching sojourns in India, I looked forward to a quiet day in silent communion with rare and unknown species. But I was in for a rude shock. To my horror, the tiny island was crawling with hundreds of bird-watchers, hell bent on adding as many valuable ticks on their all important check list in the fastest possible time. Equipped with walkie-talkies linked with a C.B. radio system, they ran helter-skelter from location to location the instant a promising sighting was relayed on the network.

The moment news was received that a grey-checked thrush had been blown 2000 miles off course and was seen recovering its wits on a rock on the sea front, excitement mounted sky high. The bird-watchers moved *en block*. Charging down a winding lane, across the beach, following a narrow path along the sea, with poor me hardpressed to keep up the pace. But alas, just as I reached the site, an angry wave knocked the poor grey-check into the sea.

Where they had sprung from, is beyond me, but a bevy of bird-watchers were already there, standing shoulder to shoulder, at every vantage point, telescopes, binoculars, cameras at the ready. "Its gone into the hudge", a tweedy character informed

me. I focussed my vintage binoculars, hoping for a climpse through the foliage, but all I saw was a bit of hedge. With bated breath, the total assemblage waited for the Pallas's Warbler to make an appearance, but to no avail.

Therefore when an Uplands Sandpiper was reported in another field nearby, the hopeless vigil was abandoned and a general scramble ensued. But no matter how fast I ran to reach the spot first, others were there before me. Pushing my way through a small gap between rows of bird-watchers packing the wicket-gate, I raised the old binoculars, and, low and behold, there was a good sized speckled bird with a thin neck and a sharp beak making a series of little runs. Now it was coming towards me, now it turned sharply to the right, now it had flown off! What a brief encounter! But no matter. At last I had made a rare sighting I had seen an Uplands Sandpiper.

Right through the rest of the day, I rushed here and there, but not a single other sighting could I manage, the milieu of bird-watchers scaring off the poor birds. How I longed for the quiet solitude of our Bharati bird sanctuaries, and our leisurely style of bird-watching.

# Unique Indian butterflies endangered

By Srinivasa Prasad

The Times of India News Service  
BANGALORE, March 2-

Where have all the butterflies gone? The answer to that question could hold the key to understanding the complexity of the biodiversity of the western ghats, says Harish Gaonkar, the Goa-born Danish scientist who is mapping butterfly habitats in India and studying related ecological factors.

Halfway through the two-year study, the scientist of Copenhagen's famed Zoological Museum has already something startling to say. The western ghats region has in all about 350 butterfly species but some 65 to 70 butterfly species that are found only here and nowhere else in the world can be counted as endangered. Mr Gaonkar, 47, points out that the single most important reason for the marginalisation of these butterflies is the destruction of their habitats.

A butterfly of a species normally

subsists on a plant of a certain species. And most of the western ghats' butterflies of different species have their 'host plants' in medicinal plants of different species. Many of these medicinal plants too are found only in the western ghats in the world. If the population of the winged beauties is depleting, it also shows that their home plants too are on the own list of endangered species. "This is a very serious business," says an agitated Mr Gaonkar.

The story of Travancore Evening Brown (biological name: *Parantirhoea marshalli*, a black-bodied and brown-and-green winged butterfly of the western ghats appears to be particularly sad because this species is entomologically important. While most of the butterflies in the region have their relatives (those with some common characteristics or with perhaps common ancestors) in the eastern Himalayas and south-east Asia, the Travancore Evening Brown has its closest relatives in the southern American jungles.

The Evening Brown's common ancestry with southern American butterflies only shows that that the entire world was once one common mass, says Mr Gaonkar. That makes this species important, he says, adding that there is "great urgency" in preserving it.

The reason for the Travancore Evening Brown's (called so because it flies only in the evenings) depleting numbers is no mystery. This species chiefly subsists on bamboo jungles and with bamboo being increasingly exploited for paper-making, the butterflies are virtually homeless. "This species is practically on the verge of extinction," says a sad Mr Gaonkar.

If the Malabar Evening Brown has not been seen for a century in the western ghats it is partly because it has become rare and partly because this butterfly lives in the jungles where king cobras abound and not many dare to be confronted by deadly snakes just to have a look at some butterflies.

The Malabar Treenymph (*Idea malabarica*) that thrives on a unique medicinal plant used for making medicines for a heart ailment was once found very widely in the region but is now seen only in the humid riverine valleys and slopes of the western ghats.

Malabar Rose (*Pachliopta pandyana*)—a poisonous butterfly with

a black and white spotted body—once existed right from the ground-level upto an altitude of 700 feet. But now the Rose is marginalised to a very narrow belt and is seen only at altitudes ranging between 300 feet and 700 feet.

The Bird Wing (*Troides mynos*) which is the biggest butterfly not only in the western ghats but among all of India's 1,600 butterfly species—it's brown-and-black wings can stretch up to a breathtaking eight inches—is also endangered but not to a very dangerous extent. The Bird Wing is so far lucky only because, unlike most others, it lives on various species of shrubs instead of just one.

The Bird Wing may be a little fortunate, but most of the other species are not and share the tragedy of Evening Brown, Treenymph and Rose. Explains Mr Gaonkar: "A butterfly is an indicator of environmental change. For one thing, the density of population of a certain butterfly can easily indicate the density of the forests it depends on."

While a permanent way of preventing the extinction is to stop the destruction of the ecosystems itself, Mr Gaonkar is doing his own bit with help from the state government. A butterfly farm is on the cards at Sirsi in Uttara Kannada while a butterfly museum is likely to be set up in Bangalore.



PRESIDENT  
B. G. DESHMUKH  
I. A. S. (Retd.)

Ref: 2399/2008

17<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Dear Member,

The Society completes 125 years on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008. We are planning to celebrate the event. We have invited the President of India to inaugurate the celebration on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at Y. B. Chavan Auditorium, Mumbai. I do hope that you will participate in this function and if you are planning to do so, could you please collect a formal invitation from the Society's office on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 as we have to inform the authorities of the number of people attending. Invitations will not be issued after the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. Invitations will be available from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at the Membership desk.

I look forward to having you with us on this auspicious occasion.

Yours sincerely,

J. C. Daniel  
Honorary Secretary